



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Address by Georgian Foreign Minister Salome Zourabichvili

As delivered by Ambassador Stephan M. Minikes
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
July 29, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and welcome to Foreign Minister Zourabichvili to the Permanent Council. We have followed the events in Georgia very closely over the past year and, in general, are pleased with Georgia's democratic development and we are also pleased with the work that the OSCE Mission in Georgia has done. It has been important work in supporting these developments, and we also welcome the Head of Mission, Mr. Roy Reeve.

We noted with great interest the proposal of the Foreign Minister which was made today to expand the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia.

The United States strongly supports the territorial integrity of Georgia and welcomes the recent efforts by the Government of Georgia to advance the process of peaceful resolution of the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

We strongly support the work of the OSCE Mission in Georgia to assist in efforts to resolve the South Ossetian conflict peacefully through a political agreement respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and we also support the Georgian government's idea that the OSCE can continue to play an even more active and productive role in the settlement process.

We are pleased that the most recent meeting of the Joint Control Commission in Moscow has led to a decrease in tensions that had built up in South Ossetia since the beginning of June. It is important now to build upon the agreement reached at the JCC meeting to decrease tensions even further and to provide a boost to the settlement process. We welcome the proposed high-level meeting of authorized delegations to be convened by the Chairman-in-Office.

We believe that a number of the proposals raised by the Government of Georgia, both at the JCC meeting in Moscow and here today, are constructive, and we understand that not all of these proposals are currently acceptable to all participating States.

We stand willing to work with the Government of Georgia and other key interested parties and participating States to come to agreement early this fall on how best to amend the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Georgia so as to promote greater stability in South Ossetia and a more rapid settlement of the conflict there that is fully in line with OSCE principles.

Thank you very much.